



**MODULE 2**

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**STUDY GUIDE**

**HIV/AIDS: 101**

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# CONDOM USES AND AVAILABILITY

When used properly, condoms create a barrier that prevents the virus from spreading from an infected individual to someone else. When used consistently and correctly, condoms are highly effective at preventing many types of STDs, including HIV.

## WHEN CONDOMS FAIL

Most often, human error causes condoms to fail. Some mistakes people make when using a condom are:

- Putting on a condom after sexual contact occurs
- Using a condom incorrectly. It may not be unrolled all the way or the user attempts to put it on inside out, realizes the mistake, and then corrects it.
- Condoms left in extreme heat or cold for prolonged periods of time—or placed in wallets for extended periods can degrade.
- Using oil or petroleum-based lubricants with latex condoms—including hand lotions or message oil a person might have on their hands—begins to break down the latex and causes it to rip or tear during sexual activity.

Condoms need to be removed immediately after ejaculation while the penis is still erect.

## USING CONDOMS CORRECTLY

Here are some guidelines for using condoms properly:

1. Store condoms in a cool, dry place. Do NOT keep them in your wallet or back pocket, glove compartment or near sharp objects! Sunlight, heat or cold can damage them.
2. Do NOT use condoms past their expiration date.
3. Condoms should not be used if the package is damaged or if the condom itself looks discolored, brittle or unusual.
4. Do NOT use your teeth, nails, or other sharp objects to open the package. You could damage the condom.
5. Condoms need to be unrolled all the way onto the penis, leaving a small area at the tip for the ejaculatory fluid. Pinch the receptacle end of the condom as it's being rolled down onto the penis to prevent air bubbles from being caught at the tip. This will allow room for the ejaculatory fluid and help prevent breakage.
6. Use condoms from start to finish. Engaging in penetration and then withdrawing just before ejaculation to put the condom on does little in the way of prevention. Body fluids are transferred before ejaculation occurs.
7. Use a new condom for each sexual act. Never use a condom more than once.
8. If uncircumcised, pull back the foreskin before rolling the condom down the penis.
9. Condoms need to be removed immediately after ejaculation while the penis is still erect to prevent contents from spilling.
10. Throw away used condoms—do not flush them down the toilet.

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11. Latex condoms are more effective at preventing HIV than lambskin condoms. Lambskin condoms are porous (meaning, they have small pores, or openings), making them ineffective in preventing the spread of STDs and HIV. Lambskin condoms are only effective in preventing pregnancy.
12. Use only water-based or silicone-based lubricant with latex condoms. Never use oil or petroleum based lube with latex. Oil and petroleum-based lubricants can destroy latex.
13. Add a small amount of water-based lubricant to the inside of a condom to increase sensitivity and lessen the chance of breakage.
14. Keep condoms located so they are readily available when needed.
15. Never use two condoms at the same time. This does NOT provide extra protection. This creates friction between each condom, which could lead to breakage.
16. Never use a female condom and male condom at the same time. Again, this does NOT provide extra protection. This creates friction between each condom, which could lead to breakage.

## CONDOM AVAILABILITY

Condoms may be obtained free of charge at county health departments, community organizations and testing sites.

## TYPES OF CONDOMS

**Polyurethane condoms:** Plastic or polyurethane condoms are stronger and more sensitive than latex condoms. Polyurethane condoms have several advantages over latex condoms, such as: oil, water or silicone-based lubricants may be used; they serve as an alternative for individuals allergic to latex; and polyurethane may be more pleasant for individuals who find latex condoms undesirable due to their lack of sensitivity.

**Nonoxynol-9 (N-9) and Condoms:** The golden rule of sex has changed from "always use a condom" to "always use a condom without Nonoxynol-9!" Studies have shown that Nonoxynol-9, the substance used in many brands of condoms, lubricants and creams as extra protection against pregnancy and STDs, may strip the inner lining of the rectum during anal sex, making it more prone to abrasions and open wounds. By its nature, anal intercourse, with or without a condom, can pose a risk of infection due to tears and abrasions.

**Female Condoms:** The polyurethane female condom is an option for women to protect themselves against HIV and other STDs, particularly when their male partner is reluctant to wear a condom. Just like with the male condom, the female condom must be used correctly and consistently for every sexual act to provide effective protection. A female condom has its advantages:

- The convenience of inserting the condom into the vagina up to eight hours before intercourse so it doesn't interfere with the moment.
- Because it's made of polyurethane, it doesn't produce irritation or allergic reactions in people sensitive to latex.
- Like the polyurethane male condom, the consumer can use either oil- or water-based lubricants.
- There are no special storage requirements because polyurethane is not affected by changes in temperature or dampness.

The female condom is not a replacement for the male condom as a means of contraception or disease protection, but rather an addition to barrier method options.

## OTHER WAYS CONDOMS PROVIDE PROTECTION

For oral sexual contact—whether mouth-to-penis, mouth-to-vagina, or mouth-to-anus—barrier methods of prevention must be used to avoid HIV and STD transmission.

Condoms, non-lubricated or flavored, may be used for mouth-to-penis protection. If a flavored condom is used, it's advisable to check for any allergic reaction prior to sexual contact.

A condom may be cut into a large square and placed over the vagina for mouth-to-vagina protection or placed over the anus for mouth-to-anus protection. Protective "dams," latex and polyurethane, can be used for mouth/vagina or mouth/anus contact. However, dams may be difficult to obtain.